

AFRO SAMURAI®

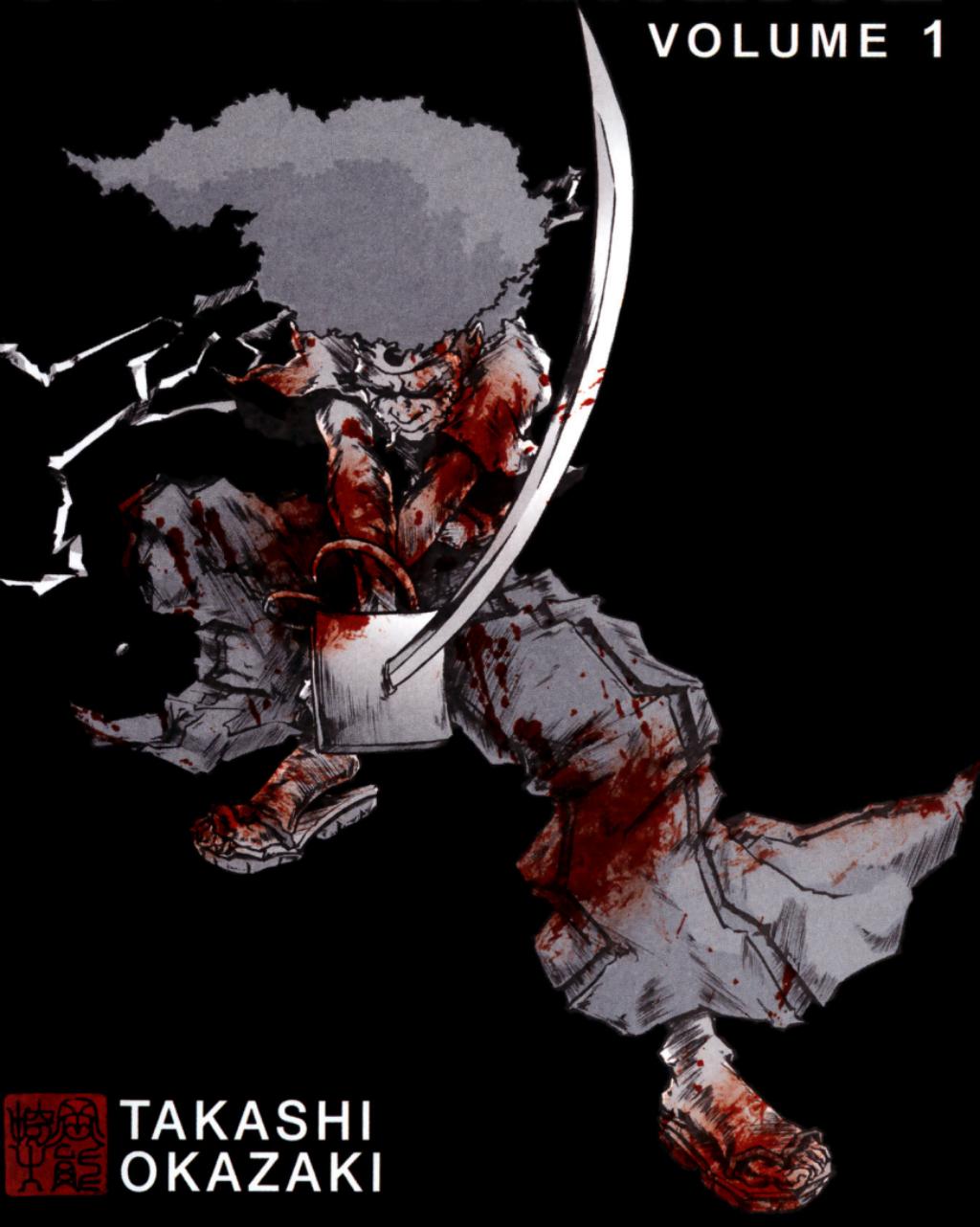


TAKASHI OKAZAKI

A TOR/SEVEN SEAS BOOK

AFRO SAMURAI®

VOLUME 1



TAKASHI
OKAZAKI

AFRO SAMURAI®

VOLUME 1

story & art by **Takashi Okazaki**

STAFF CREDITS

translation	Greg Moore
adaptation	Joshua Fialkov
cover design	Pablo Defendini
lettering & design	Roland Amago
layout	Bambi Eloriaga-Amago
editor	Adam Arnold

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AFRO SAMURAI

#01

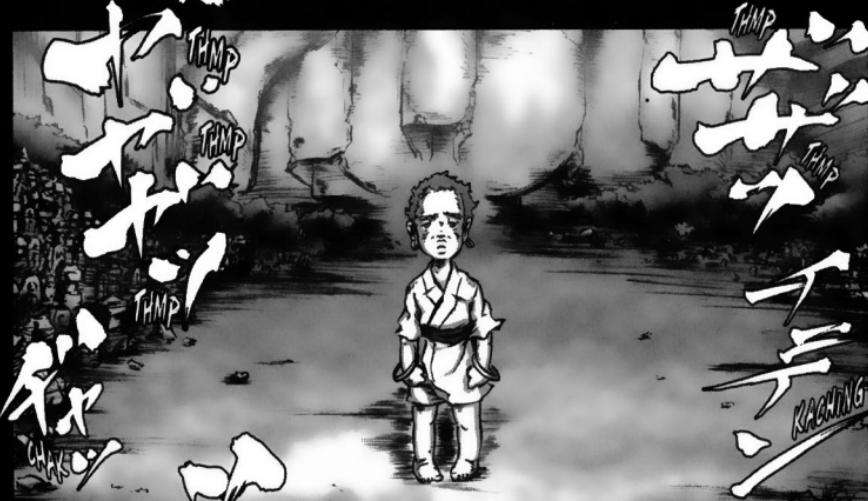


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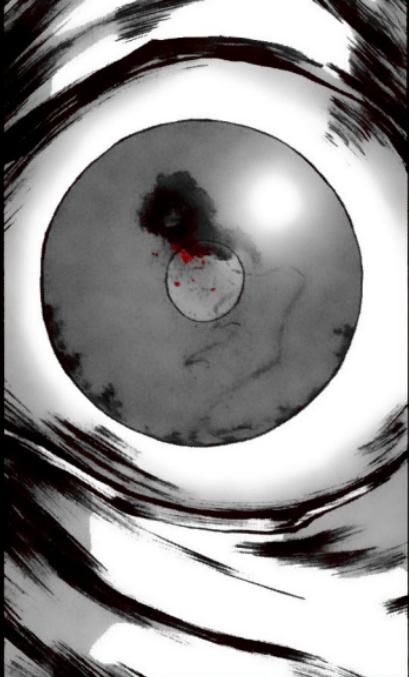






















YO, YOU WITH THE AFRO!
KILLIN' OUR THING, YA DIG?
WE DON'T CARE ABOUT YOUR
LIFE. WHAT WE CARE ABOUT
IS THE NO. 2 HEADBAND
YOU'RE WEARING!

I DUNNO HOW MUCH THAT
THING'S REALLY WORTH,
BUT THERE'S A BIG OL'
REWARD IN STORE!



NOW WE'RE NOT LOOKIN'
TO KILL NO ONE WE DON'T
HAVE TO. YOU'RE A KILLER,
I'M SURE YOU UNDER-
STAND.



AND, THEY DO SAY
THERE'S STRENGTH
IN NUMBERS...
RIGHT?

SHK



SO HOW'S ABOUT JUST
HANDING IT OVER NICE
AND EASY?













OHoho. All those professionals and they still couldn't beat him.

I didn't expect him to make it this far past my traps. He really is No. 2.



THAT HEADBAND ISN'T JUST FOR SHOW. IT'S PROOF THAT HE'S THE SECOND STRONGEST MAN IN THE WORLD.

YWEEE

IT SEEMS ANNIHILATING HIM WILL TAKE SOME TIME... HOHO, I SUPPOSE I CAN'T JUST SIT AROUND STARING LIKE THIS FOREVER.

SRRCH

SRRCH

TIME TO HAND IT OVER TO MY BROTHERS UP IN TECHISEN.
OHoho.

AT THIS POINT,
IT'S OUT OF
MY HANDS.

SH
MP







MY JII-SAMA TOLD ME A STORY ONCE, ABOUT THE TYRANT WITH THE POWER OF A GOD, SECRETLY CONTROLLING THIS WORLD. A MAN CALLED NO. 1.

AND ABOUT THE ONE PERSON IN EXISTENCE WHO COULD CHALLENGE HIM.

YOU'RE HIM, AREN'T YOU? I NEVER THOUGHT IN A MILLION YEARS THE STORY WAS TRUE. HEH...

BAD TIME TO REMEMBER SOMETHING LIKE THAT, HUH?

JUST TELL ME THIS AND WE'LL CALL IT A PARTING GIFT. WHY DO YOU WANT TO GAIN CONTROL OF THE WORLD?

SHHH

IT'S JUST
REVENGE.



HEH...
REVENGE...



WHAT A
JOKE...





TWO, YOU'VE DONE WELL. GO AHEAD AND START MAKING YOUR WAY BACK HOME.



WE'VE GOT PREPARATIONS IN PROGRESS TO INTERCEPT HIM.



THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT. WE'VE GOT ALL THE DATA YOU'VE COLLECTED ON NO. 2. OUR COUNTER STRATEGY IS INFALLIBLE.

WE JUST NEED TO TAKE THAT HEADBAND FROM HIM TO OBTAIN THE "DIVINE POWER."



IT IS THE DESTINY OF THE EMPTY SEVEN TO WIELD THAT POWER. EHHHEHEHEHEH...









AFRO SAMURAI

#02



アフロ
サムライ





OIOIO!!
TODAY WE SETTLE THIS,
YOU BASTARD!!



OH, WHY THAT SOUNDS LIKE
THE AFTERNOON SQUAWKING OF
KASHIMOTO! HOW'S THE ARM
DOING, YOU OLD DOG?



WHY, YOU!! YOU DARE
TO MAKE FUN OF ME,
SHICHIGORO?!

YOU'RE DEAD!!



NOW, NOW, WE DON'T
WANT TO CAUSE AN
ACCIDENT HERE. LET'S
GET AWAY FROM THIS
ROAD, HUH?

GET AWAY!

H...HUH?

HEY, YOU!! YEAH, RONIN
OVER THERE! WOULD YOU
BE SO KIND? SORRY TO
BUG YOU WHILE YOU'RE
RESTING, BUT...

BLT!



SORRY, KOTARO, NO FISHING TODAY. NOW SCAMPER ON BACK TO OI-CHAN'S PLACE.

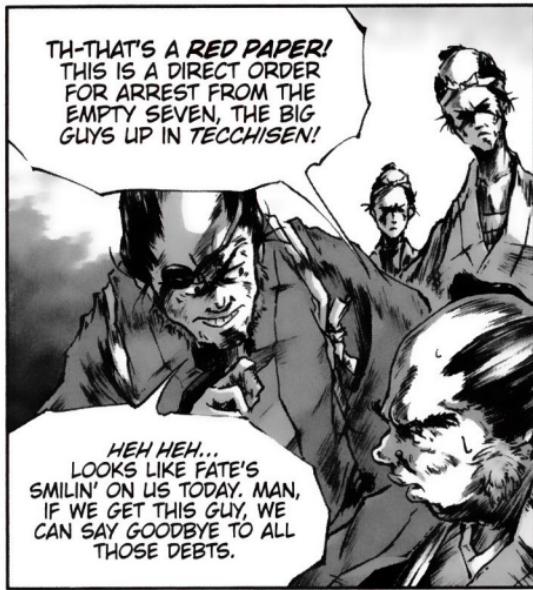
OKEY!

CUT THE CRAP,
SMART-ASS!
NOW'S NO TIME
TO WORRY ABOUT
OTHER PEOPLE!

B...BOSS!

SKRENCH

OW, THAT HURTS,
YOU IMBECILE!
WHATAYA WANT?!



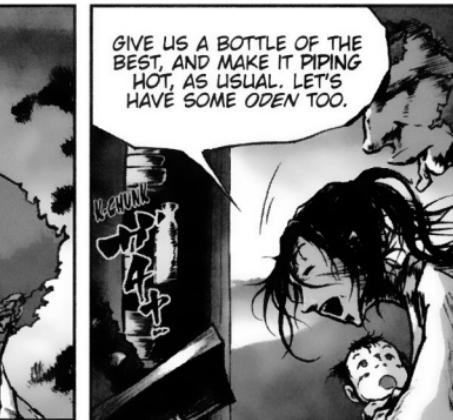
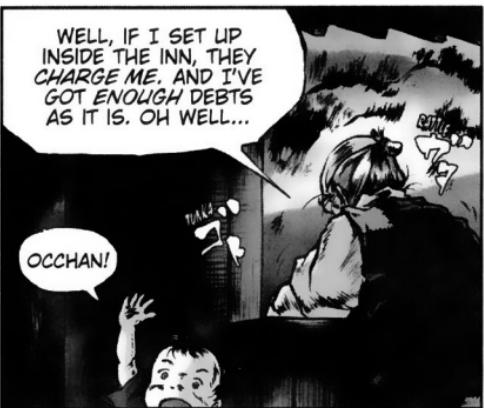




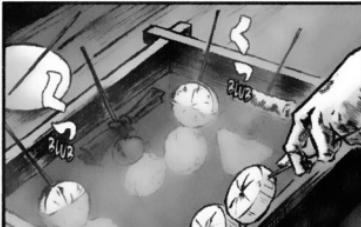


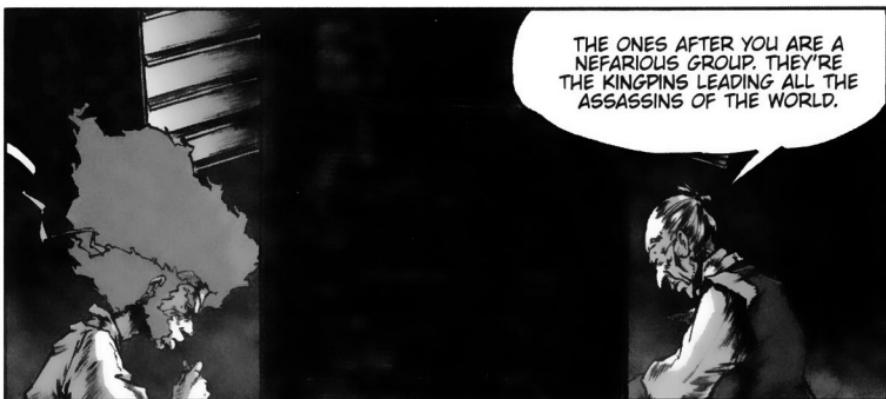














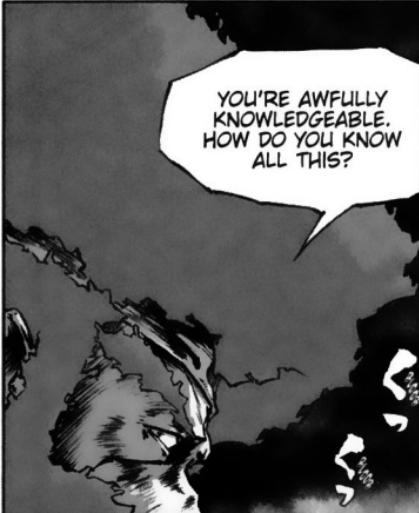
FIVE QUINTUPLE MONKS
LIVING IN TECCHISEN,
KNOWN AS THE
"EMPTY SEVEN."



THEY SEND OUT DIRECT ORDERS
CALLED "RED PAPERS" TO ALL SORTS
OF ASSASSIN GROUPS. AND THEY'RE
AFTER YOUR LIFE. NATURALLY, THERE'S
A BIG REWARD FOR IT, TOO.



IT'S ENOUGH MONEY TO LET
YOU LIVE LIKE A KING FOR THE
REST OF YOUR LIFE AND STILL
HAVE PLENTY LEFT OVER. YOU
CAN HARDLY BLAME THOSE
ASSASSINS FOR TRYING TO
KILL YOU.



YOU'RE AWFULLY
KNOWLEDGEABLE.
HOW DO YOU KNOW
ALL THIS?



HEH HEH...WELL,
SHICHIGORO AND I
MADE A LIVING OFF
KILLING ONCE TOO. WE
TOOK COUNTLESS LIVES.
JUST LIKE YOU.

WE WORKED UP QUITE A REPUTATION FOR OURSELVES. BEFORE YOU KNEW IT WE WERE DOING SPECIAL "RED PAPER" JOBS DIRECT FROM THOSE MONKS.

IF I WAS STILL ACTIVE, I WOULD'VE DONE BATTLE WITH YOU FOR CERTAIN.

BUT WE BOTCHED A BIG JOB. TAKE A LOOK. ARM'S NOT GOOD FOR CUTTING MUCH BESESIDES DAIKON THESE DAYS. HEH HEH...

NO LONGER OF ANY USE, I BECAME ANOTHER ONE OF THE MONKS' TARGETS. BUT SHICHIGORO CAME TO MY RESCUE.

BUT THAT ERA ENDS TODAY, OI-CHAN.

IT'S ALREADY BEEN FIVE YEARS SINCE ALL THAT. NOW WE TRAVEL AROUND DRAGGING THIS ODEN STAND WITH US, SOMEHOW MANAGING TO SURVIVE.

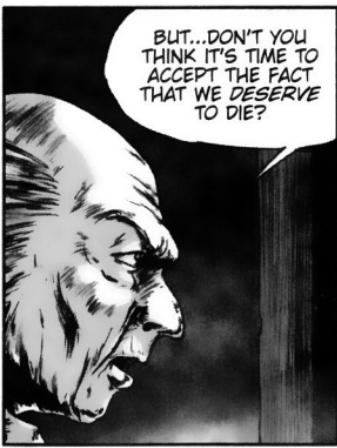
SHI-SHICHIGORO, YOU DON'T MEAN--



YEAH.
I'M GONNA KILL
HIM.



IF WE JUST BRING HIS
HEAD TO THE MONKS,
NOBODY WILL BE AFTER US
ANYMORE. WE WON'T HAVE
TO RUN ANYMORE.



BUT...DON'T YOU
THINK IT'S TIME TO
ACCEPT THE FACT
THAT WE DESERVE
TO DIE?



IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU AND
ME, OI-CHAN. I DON'T WANT
TO PUT KOTARO IN HARM'S
WAY ANYMORE. PLEASE TRY
TO UNDERSTAND.



THAT'S JUST
HOW IT IS. LET'S
GO, NO. 2.



BL00B7



SO THERE'S
REALLY NO OTHER WAY,
SHICHIGORO?



I WANTED TO
LEAD YOU DOWN A
BRIGHTER PATH.



YOU WERE A BOY RAISED BY
THOSE OLD MONKS TO BE
NOTHING MORE THAN A TOOL
OF DESTRUCTION, AND FOR AS
LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER,
I'VE DEDICATED MYSELF TO
SAVING YOU.

BUT IN THE END,
I COULDN'T EVEN
DO THAT.



THERE WASN'T EVEN A HINT OF MURDEROUSNESS IN YOU WHEN YOU CUT DOWN THOSE MEN THIS AFTERNOON.

FOR YOU, KILLING IS NO DIFFERENT THAN TAKING A BREATH OF AIR. JUST LIKE I USED TO BE.

THERE'S NO PLACE IN THIS WORLD FOR DANGEROUS MEN LIKE US, DON'T YOU THINK?

COME ON...

SHIKI











SHICHIGORO...YOU
CAN REST NOW...







END OF #02



AFRO SAMURAI

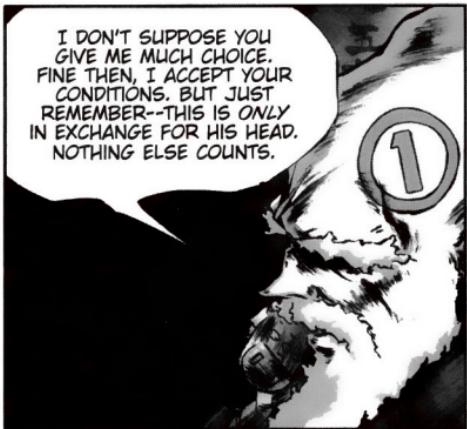
#03



100
2002



FINE. I'LL DO IT! BUT
SINCE I'LL BE PUTTING
MY OWN ASS ON THE
LINE, HOWSABOUT A
FEW CONDITIONS?



NO. A FIGHT TO THE DEATH BETWEEN THOSE TWO IS JUST WHAT WE NEED. WE WIN REGARDLESS OF WHO DIES. IF GOROKIBE WINS WE'LL JUST SEND THE ASSASSINS WE WERE GOING TO USE TO KILL NO. 2.



HMM... SO IT'S LIKE HITTING TWO BIRDS WITH ONE STONE.



FUCK THOSE ASSHOLES! I CAN SEE RIGHT THROUGH 'EM! I'LL USE NO. 2'S HEAD AS A SHIELD AND SEND 'EM ALL TO HELL!

AH... AHHH--!



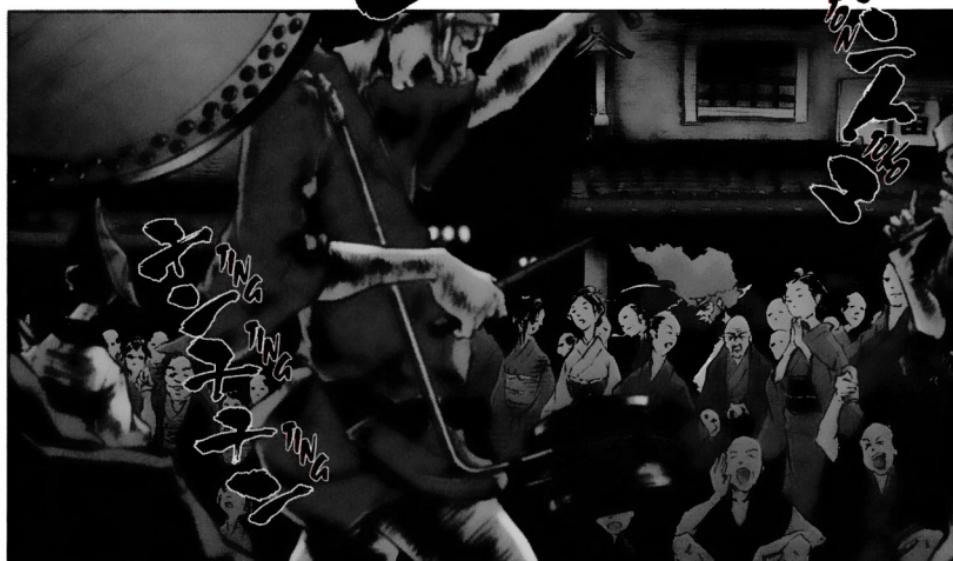
THEN AGAIN, IF HE'S BEEN GIVING THOSE GEEZERS THIS MUCH TROUBLE...



HEH...NO. 2, HUH?
SOUNDS LIKE HE'LL MAKE
FOR A GOOD WARM-UP.
I'LL PLAY WITH HIM FOR
A WHILE, THEN KILL HIM.
GAHAHAHA...





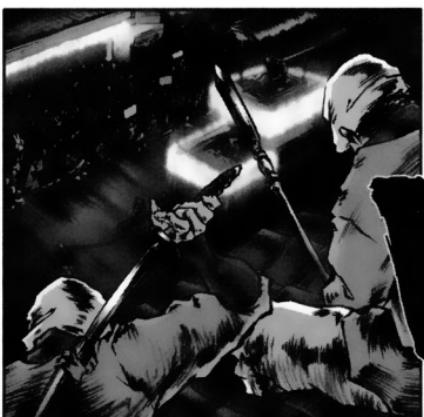






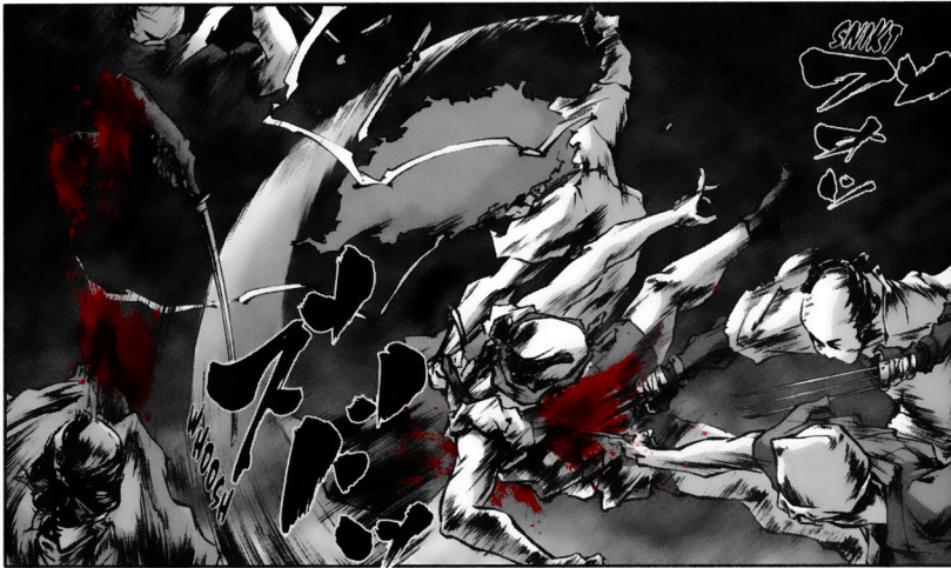














GACK!

WHOOOSH

SPLURCH

POP

GAIAAH!

UWA!!

MMPH!

CRUNCH

GYAEEEEE!!

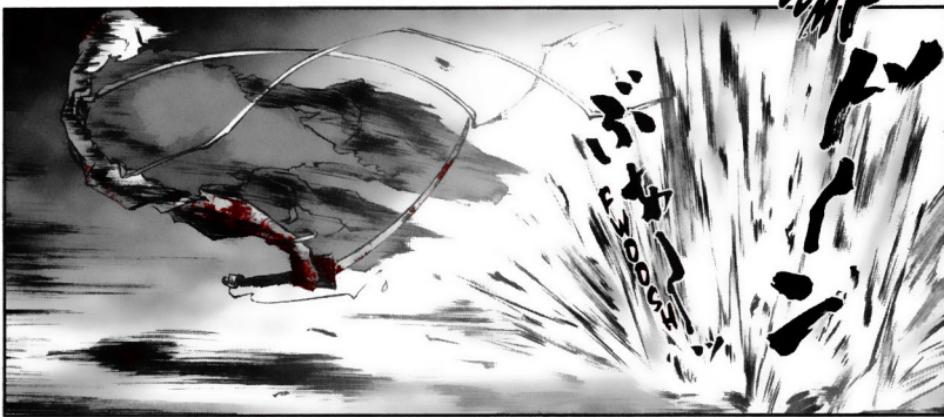
わおおお
WAHAHAHA

きやん
けえん

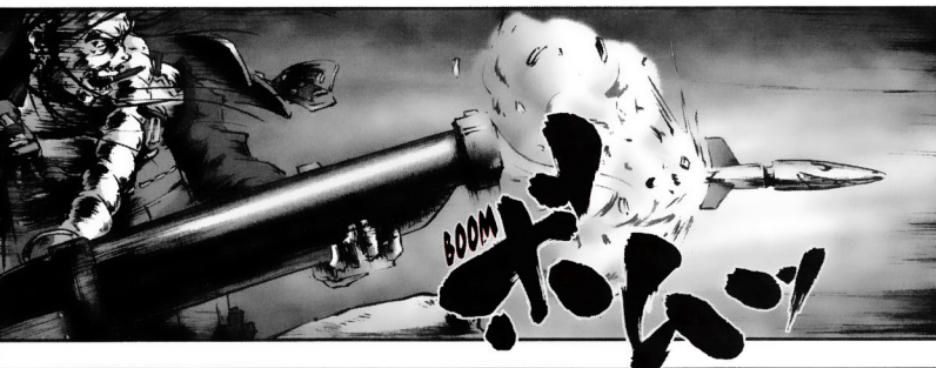








GAAHAMAMA! EVEN THE
GREAT NO. 2 CAN'T DO
NOTHIN' BESIDES RUN OFF
AND HIDE AT THE SIGHT OF
MY GREAT, BIG CANNON!

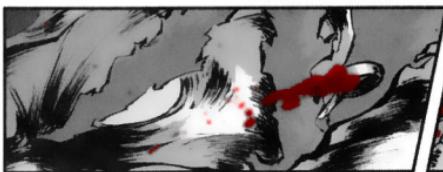












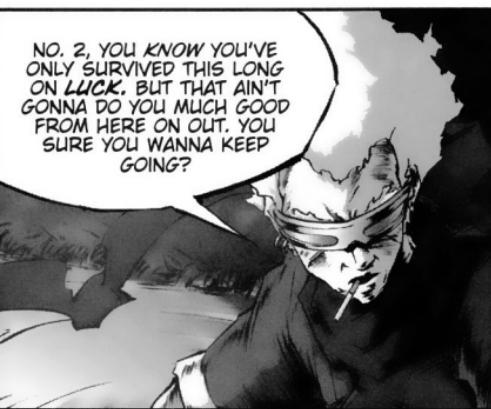




TO GET TO MT. SUMERU,
FIRST YOU GOTTA PASS THROUGH
TECHISEN, THE HIDEOUT FOR
THOSE DAMN OLD MOTHERFICKERS.
AND THERE'S NO DOUBT THEY'VE
SET UP SOMETHIN' NASTY FOR
YOU TO FALL INTO.



NO. 2, YOU KNOW YOU'VE
ONLY SURVIVED THIS LONG
ON LUCK. BUT THAT AIN'T
GONA DO YOU MUCH GOOD
FROM HERE ON OUT. YOU
SURE YOU WANNA KEEP
GOING?



HEH HEH HEH...
SO THAT'S HOW IT'S
GONNA BE, HUH?
WELL, DON'T SAY I
DIN'T WARN YA.









AFRO SAMURAI

#04

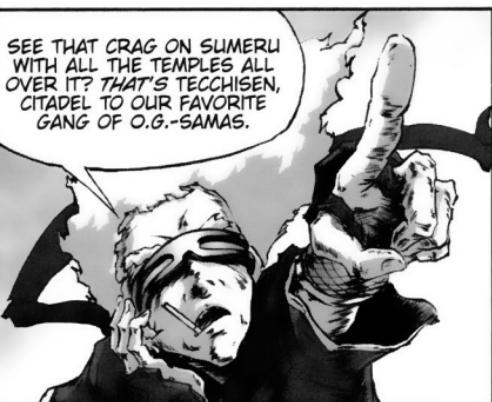






IF YOU MANAGE TO BEST
HIM, WE'LL GIVE YOU
WHATEVER YOU DESIRE,
JUST AS PROMISED!

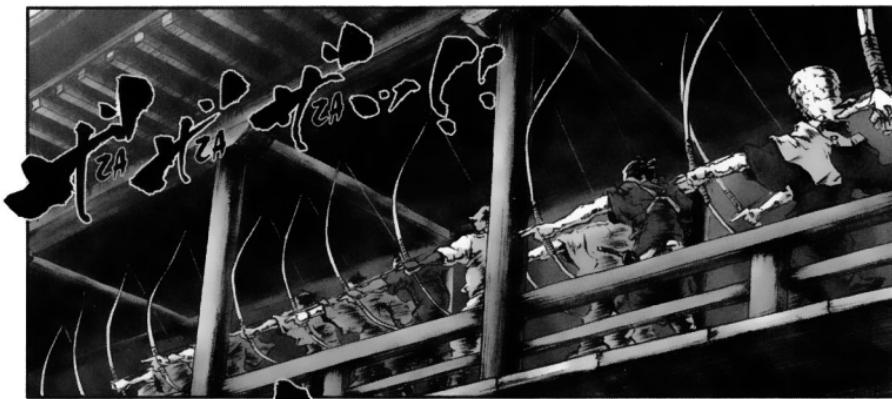






OUR LONG
STRUGGLE ENDS
HERE!

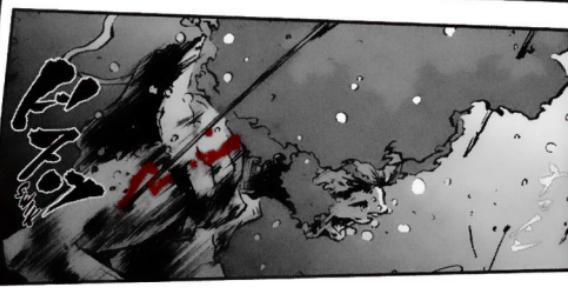
PREPARE
FOR YOUR DEATH,
NO. 2!

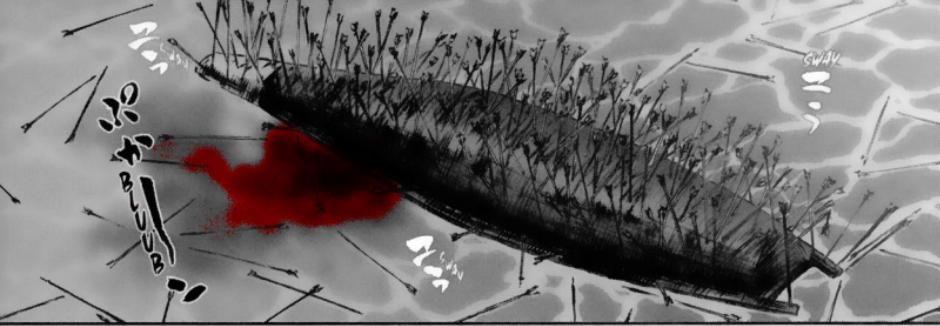


NOW I RETURN
YOU TO HELL!!























A MOST ROBUST PERFORMANCE, NO. 2.
BUT I CAN NOT LET YOU PASS.

A SIMPLE CHALLENGE,
NO. 2! I AM SHINOJIRYU
BOIJUTSU ROKUTARO,
YOUNGEST OF THE
EMPTY SEVEN!

HEH, IF YOU DON'T
DEFEAT ME, YOU'LL
NEVER MAKE IT TO THE
MAIN HALL, MUCH LESS
MT. SLIMERU.

GRIN
二
三
I WON'T GO EASY ON YOU
JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE
WOUNDED! YOU'RE SUPPOSED
TO BE THE "SECOND STRON-
GEST MAN IN THE WORLD,"
AFTER ALL.

二
三













HUH...AS AMAZING A FIGHT AS YOU'D EXPECT FROM THE GREAT NO. 2. I'M PROUD TO HAVE FACED YOU IN MY FINAL BATTLE.



BUT IT SEEMS YOU COULDN'T SLICE ME IN TWO WITH JUST ONE HAND.

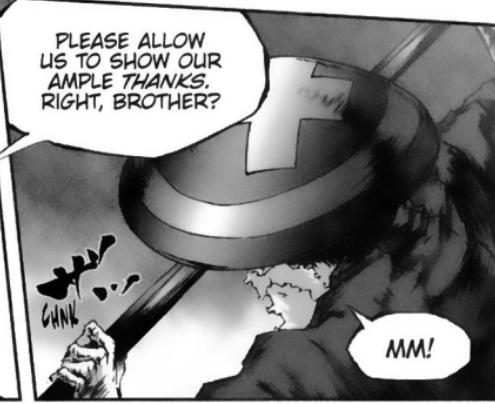


THE DEFEAT OF ROKUTARO COMES AT A PRICE!



FORGIVE ME BROTHERS! I LEAVE THE REST TO YOU!







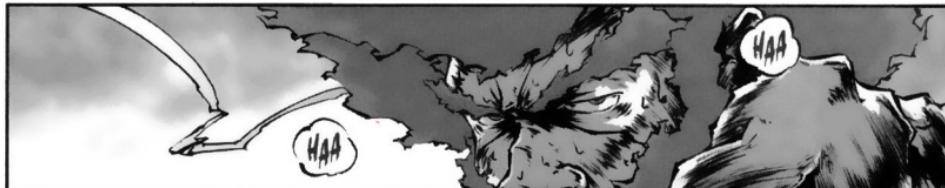


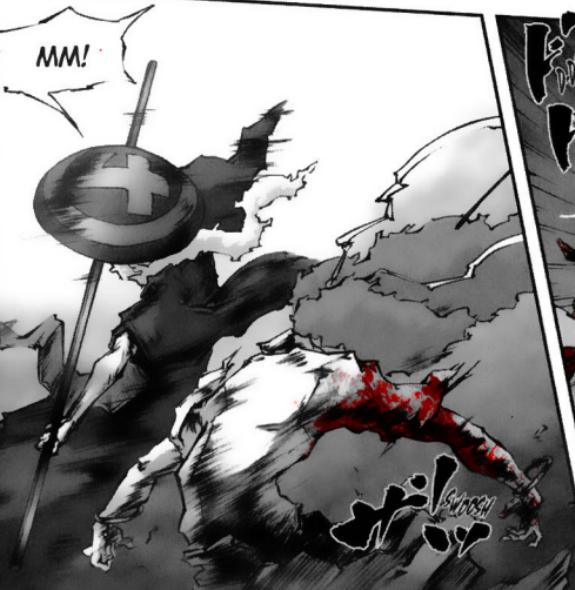
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AFRO SAMURAI

#05



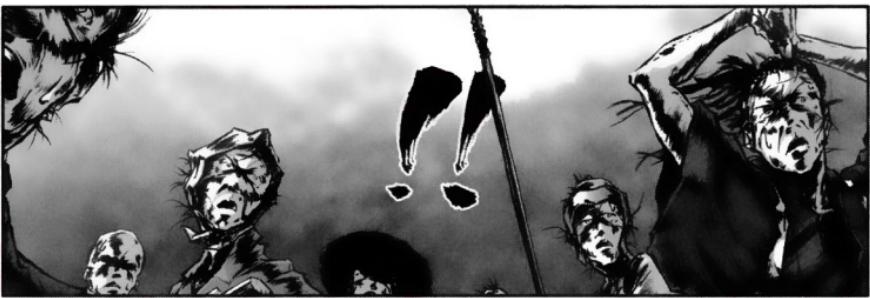














BROTHER FOUR,
BROTHER FIVE, ROKUTARO...
REST IN PEACE. NAMANDABU
NAMANDABU...



NO. WE MUST TAKE NO. I'S POWER...ETERNAL LIFE...THE DIVINE POWER...IN ORDER TO GAIN ETERNAL LIFE...TO CONQUER THIS FEAR OF DEATH... MUTTER MUTTER...

YOU MOCK.

WHAT?!
ETERNAL LIFE?!!

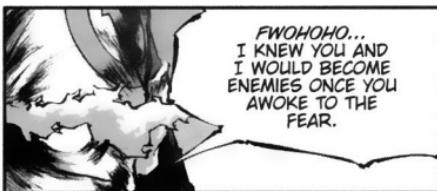
HAHAHAHA! DO YOU REALLY BELIEVE IN THAT STUFF?! HAVE YOU LOST YOUR GOD-DAMN MIND?!

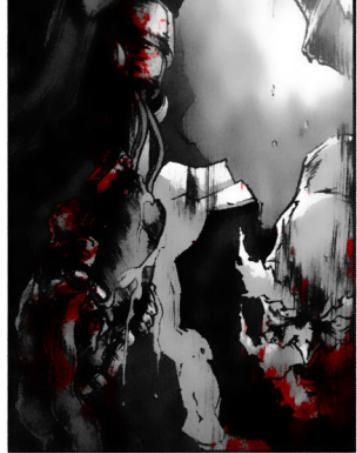
HMPH. LAUGH IF YOU WANT TO. I GUESS YOU HAVEN'T NOTICED IT YET. THE INESCAPABLE FEAR OF DEATH, APPROACHING EVER CLOSER WITH EACH DAY...

HMMHM... YOU MEAN ROKUTA AND THE OTHERS DIED FOR SUCH A RIDICULOUS FANTASY?!! THIS IS A FARCE!

YOU'VE LIVED SINCE THE FIRST CENTURY AND IT'S STILL NOT LONG ENOUGH, HUH? HOW RIDICULOUS.

THEN YOU CAN DIE RIGHT NOW.









GAAAHAHAHAHA!!
DIE DIE DIE DIE!!!



WHAT CAN A YOUNG WHIPPERSNAPPER LIKE YOU DO? I'M THE ONE SUITED TO RULE THIS WORLD!



I SHOULD BE NO. 1!!





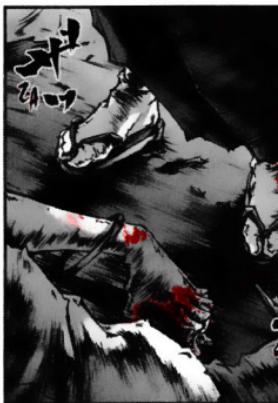
THAT'S RIGHT! IT'S MY
DESTINY AS DECREED BY
GOD HIMSELF! IT'S TIME
TO ACCEPT IT!!



FAREWELL,
NO. 2!!

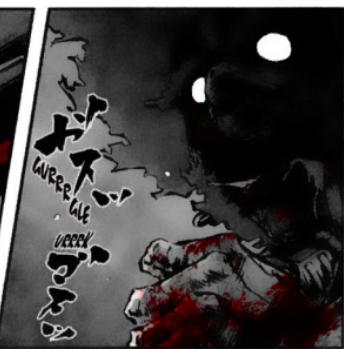


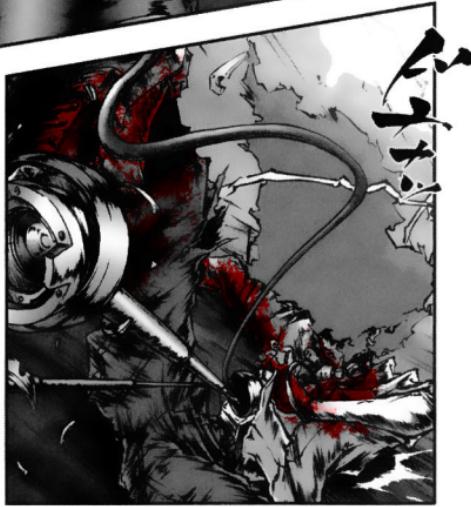




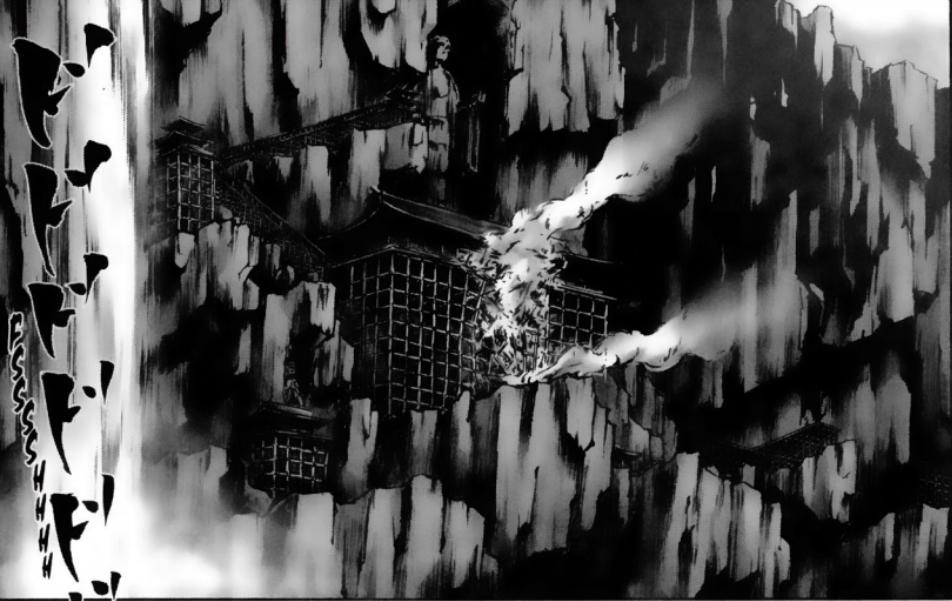


HEHEHE...AS LONG AS I HAVE THE HEADBAND, TAKING OUT NO. 1 WILL BE A CAKE-WALK! HE STILL THINKS I'M ON HIS SIDE.





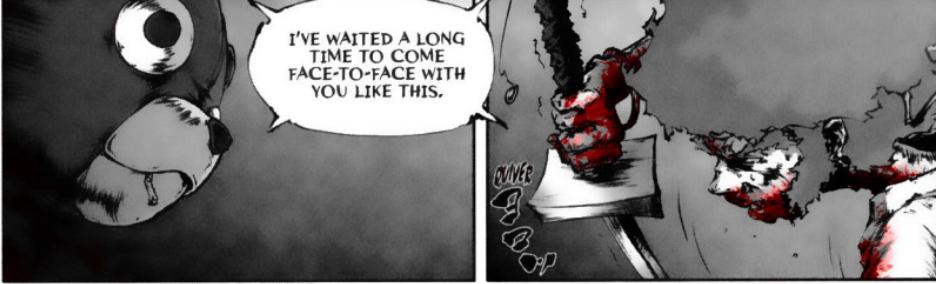


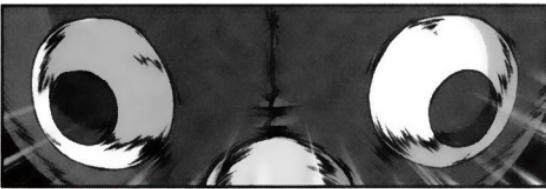




OR NO, I SUPPOSE
I SHOULD CALL
YOU NO. 2 NOW.











END OF #05



Translation Notes

Chapter 1

Page 20

In the Japanese, the bandit leader scoffs at Afro for attempting an “*iai*” with such a long sword. *Iai* is a technique in which the samurai unsheathes his sword and slices his opponent all in one swift, fluid motion, not unlike a western quick-draw. *Iaidō* is a martial art still practiced today.

Page 25

“Brother” is derived from the Japanese “*ani-ja*.”

Page 29

“*Jii-sama*” or “grandfather.”

Page 31

The name “Brother One” is derived from the Japanese “*Ichi-no-ji*,” meaning “the digit 1.”

Page 33

Mt. Sumeru - A legendary mountain said to tower over the center of the Earth and serves as a meeting place for the gods. Also known as *Shumisen*.

Chapter 2

Page 43

Tecchisen - A legendary mountain from the Buddhist world map. While Sumeru was found in the center of the Earth, *Tecchisen* lay on the very edge of it. Also known as Cakravada Mountain.

Page 47

Oden - A type of hotpot stew popular during the cold months.

Page 49

Occhan - A colloquial term of endearment for an elderly person, like “pops.”

Page 54

Daikon - A large Japanese radish used in *oden*.

Chapter 3

Page 76

“Wicked” from the word “sugee,” a modern colloquialism meaning “amazing” or “cool” (from “sugoi”).

Oshou-san - A Buddhist priest of high rank.

Page 77

“Mother” - from “kaa-san.”

Page 87

“Geezer brigade” taken from “*jiji-domo*.”

Chapter 4

Page 106

“O.G.-samas” from “*jii-sama-tachi*.”

Page 112

Rokuta is also known as “Brother Six” in the anime version of *Afro Samurai*. The Kanji for “Rokuta” are in fact the kanji for “six” (“*roku*”) and “ta,” a kanji common in male names.

Page 115

Ryou is an old type of Japanese coin. Evidently it was worth a lot more than the modern yen.

Page 125

Kunai - Throwing knives.

Page 128

Brother Four’s name in Japanese is “*Shi no Ji*” following the pattern for all the monk brothers’ names, with “*shi*” meaning “four” and “*no ji*” meaning “the digit” or “the letter.” The only difference is that in Brother Four’s case, the “*shi*” is written with the kanji for “death,” also pronounced “*shi*.” So it looks like 死の字 instead of 四の字. The pun is lost in English, although an alternative translation could be “Brother Shi,” which a fraction of readers would likely understand, since the four/death connection is one of the more well-spread factoids of Japanese cultural minutiae.

HEART SUTRA

The Heart Sutra is one of the most well-known sutras in Buddhism and is primarily chanted by Zen sects in East Asian Buddhism. As the shortest sutra, it is said to perfectly express the wisdom of Buddha in condensed form, focusing on the Buddhist doctrines of emptiness and non-attachment.

Chapter 5

Page 144

144.1

Kan-ji-zai-bo-satsu Gyô-jin-han-nya-ha-ra-mit-ta-ji

The Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, while dwelling in the deep perfection of wisdom, sees clearly

Shô-ken-go-un-kai-kuu Do-is-sai-ku-yaku Sha-ri-shi

that the five skandhas are empty, and free of suffering.

144.2

Shiki-fu-i-kuu Ku-fu-i-shiki

Form is not different from emptiness, emptiness not different from form.

Shiki-soku-ze-kuu ku-soku-ze-shiki

Form is indeed emptiness. Emptiness is indeed form.

Ju-sô-gyô-shiki Yaku-bu-nyo-ze

Feeling, perception, mentality, and consciousness are also like this.

144.3

Sha-ri-shi

Oh Shariputra,

Ze-sho-hô-kuu-sô

all dharmas have the nature of emptiness.

144.4

Fu-shô-fu-metsu

They neither arise nor perish.

144.5

Fu-ku-fu-jô Fu-zô-fu-gen Ze-ko-kuu-chuu

They are neither pure nor impure. They neither increase or decrease. Thus in emptiness

mu-shiki-mu-ju-sô-gyô-shiki-kai

there is no form, no feeling, no perception, no mentality, no consciousness.

mu-mu-myô-yaku-mu-mu-myô-jin

Nai-shi-mu-rô-shi

There is no ignorance nor end to ignorance. There is no old age and death...

Yaku-mu-rô-shi-jin Mu-ku-shuu-metsu-dô

And no end to old age and death. There is no suffering, no arising, no cessation, no path.

Mu-chi-yaku-mu-toku-i Bo-dai-sat-ta

There is no wisdom, and no attainment. The Bodhisattva

E-han-nya-ha-ra-mit-ta-ko

abides in the perfection of wisdom, and has a mind free of hindrances.

Page 145

145.1

Shô-ken-go-un-kai-kuu

The five skandhas are empty

Do-is-sai-ku-yaku Sha-ri-shi

and free of suffering.

Shiki-fu-i-kuu Ku-fu-i-shiki

Form is not different from emptiness, emptiness not different from form.

145.2

Shiki-soku-ze-kuu

Form is indeed emptiness.

kuu-soku-ze-shiki

Emptiness is indeed form.

145.3

Ju-sô-gyô-shiki

Feeling, perception, mentality

Yaku-bu-nyo-ze

and consciousness are also like this.

Sha-ri-shi

Oh Shariputra,

145.4

Ze-sho-hô-kuu-sô Fu-shô-fu-metsu

all dharmas have the nature of emptiness. They neither arise nor perish.

Fu-ku-fu-jô Fu-zô-fu-gen Ze-ko-kuu-chuu

They are neither pure nor impure. They neither increase or decrease. Thus in emptiness

mu-shiki-mu-ju-sô-gyô-shiki-kai

there is no form, no feeling, no perception, no mentality, no consciousness.

mu-mu-myô-yaku-mu-mu-myô-jin

There is no ignorance nor end to ignorance.

Nai-shi-mu-rô-shi

There is no old age and death

Yaku-mu-rô-shi-jin Mu-ku-shuu-metsu-dô

and no end to old age and death. There is no suffering, no arising, no cessation, no path.

Mu-chi-yaku-mu-toku-i

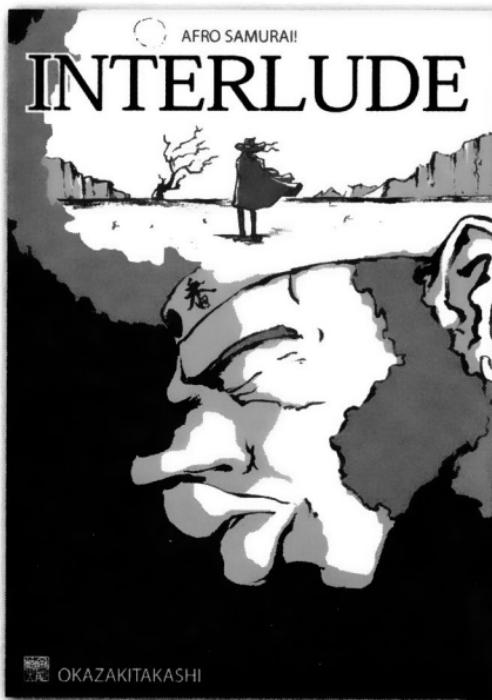
There is no wisdom, and no attainment.

Bo-dai-sat-ta E-han-nya-ha-ra-mit-ta-ko

The Bodhisattva abides in the perfection of wisdom, and has a mind free of hindrances.

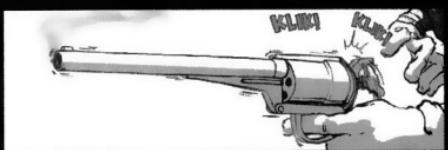
SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL

ORIGINAL DOUJINSHI PAGES



AFRO SAMURAI first began life as a *doujinshi* series in Japan before making the leap to animation and then back to manga. Presented here are eight of Okazaki-sensei's original Afro Samurai *doujinshi* pages featuring the iconic sequence that made Afro the bad-ass mutha he is today.









CREATOR BIO

TAKASHI OKAZAKI

Born in 1974 in Kanagawa, Japan.

Graduated from Tama Art University with a BA in Sculpture.

Okazaki's field of creative activity focuses on illustrations but also extends to manga, CD jacket design, sculpture, and live painting performance.

AFRO SAMURAI was originally a doujinshi manga by Okazaki that first appeared in the independent magazine *Nou Nou Hau*, and was then made into an animated TV series by GONZO. The series stars Samuel L. Jackson (who is also one of the Executive Producers), and is furnished with music composed by the hip-hop maestro RZA. After the successful US broadcast on Spike TV in 2007, the show was edited for theatrical release in Japan. DVDs are now available in six countries. Its adaptation into a Hollywood live-action film is also under way.

Representative Works:

- Designed "Metro-Taro," a fictional mascot character used in the live-action film *Negotiator Mashita Masayoshi*
- Designed "Wangan-kun," a fictional mascot character used in the live-action film *Bayside Shakedown 2*
- Provided concept design and key art for the fictional animation that appears in the live-action film *Space Travelers*
- Provided design for CD jacket and concert merchandise of Japanese rock band RIZE
- Provided artwork for the special edition of *Spider-Man 2* DVD
- Provided comic drawings for booklet of *Blade: Trinity* soundtrack CD

Nothing personal . . . it's just
REVENGE

IT IS SAID that he who wears the No. 1 headband shall rule the world. It is also said that only he who wears the No. 2 headband may challenge the No. 1.

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With the No. 2 band around his forehead, Afro sets out to give Justice his due. But with scores of assassins and two-bit warriors eager to kill the No. 2 and take his place as top contender, will he survive long enough to avenge his father's death?

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